

CROATIA | APRIL 15th, 2025
2nd NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE

SUSTAINABLE FINANCING & ENERGY EFFICIENCY



Organised by: Regional Energy and Climate Agency of Northwest Croatia (REGEA), and Green Building Council Croatia.



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**24
SPEAKERS
PANELLISTS
MODERATORS**

**239
DELEGATES**

6 SESSIONS

**Welcome and Introductory Plenary |
4 Panel Discussions | Closing**

01

PANEL DISCUSSION

EU Taxonomy and New
Financing Models

02

PANEL DISCUSSION

Decarbonisation of the
Construction Sector

03

PANEL DISCUSSION

Energy Renovation
in Citizens' Service

04

PANEL DISCUSSION

New Technical Requirements
and Standards



PANEL DISCUSSION 1

EU TAXONOMY AND NEW FINANCING MODELS

- ☐ Financial institutions highlighted the importance of transparent internal frameworks for qualifying and monitoring green loans. Banks described tailored lending products and methods for assessing ESG alignment, supporting investments in building renovation, renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure.
- ☐ Participants identified a need to clarify project-preparation requirements associated with the EU Taxonomy and the Loan Market Association's Green Loan Principles. Data gaps and inconsistencies in ESG reporting were raised as barriers, particularly for smaller institutions and companies.
- ☐ The banking-sector discussion emphasised that sustainability should extend beyond reporting and compliance. Participants highlighted the need for banks and clients to incorporate environmental considerations into investment decisions and focus on tangible sustainability projects.
- ☐ The Ministry of Finance presented the development and piloting of a green budgeting tool and a national methodology for classifying expenditure against environmental objectives. Stronger cooperation between financial and environmental institutions was identified as necessary for integrating these objectives into budget planning.
- ☐ The session conclusions called for coordinated action across regulation, public and private investment, capacity building and digital innovation to support the expansion of sustainable finance.



PANEL DISCUSSION 2

DECARBONISATION OF THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

- ☐ Participants emphasised the need to address both operational and embodied carbon emissions. Life Cycle Assessment and Environmental Product Declarations were highlighted as increasingly important tools for assessing and communicating the environmental impact of buildings and construction products.
- ☐ Industry representatives described the use of Environmental Product Declarations in product development and comparative Life Cycle Assessments to demonstrate environmental and cost differences between construction solutions. The discussion called for stronger support for domestic research and development in sustainable materials.
- ☐ The implementation of the revised Energy Performance of Buildings Directive was discussed as requiring a phased, inclusive approach. Continued dialogue with the construction and real-estate sectors, public institutions and local authorities was identified as necessary to translate requirements into practical renovation approaches.
- ☐ Participants highlighted the need for clearer guidance and local capacity building, particularly for public procurement and smaller municipalities interpreting new technical and regulatory requirements.
- ☐ The discussion identified growing market readiness for Zero Emission Building standards, influenced by financing conditions and sustainability requirements. Participants called for research and development to be supported through a coordinated combination of strategy, financing and incentives.



PANEL DISCUSSION 3

ENERGY RENOVATION IN CITIZENS' SERVICE

- ☐ Participants identified co-ownership, limited tenant representation and slow collective decision-making as barriers to renovation in multi-apartment buildings. Support structures, including renovation facilitators and one-stop shops, were considered necessary to guide residents through technical, legal and financial decisions.
- ☐ Tailored financial instruments were proposed to reflect the circumstances of co-owned buildings. These included collective loans, guarantees and phased repayment arrangements, supported by coordination among residents and appropriate legal and financial models for collective action.
- ☐ The Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund highlighted targeted outreach to identify energy-poor citizens through surveys and direct engagement. The discussion also called for clearer tools and eligibility criteria to support vulnerable households in multi-apartment buildings.
- ☐ Participants called for simpler administrative procedures and financing mechanisms for energy communities. The potential for renewable energy generation on multi-apartment building roofs to provide revenues for a national fund was discussed as a possible approach, not as an established financing mechanism.
- ☐ Trust and clear communication between residents, building managers, financial institutions and public authorities were identified as essential. Participants highlighted the need for tools that simplify technical and financial assessments and help citizens understand their renovation options.



PANEL DISCUSSION 4

NEW TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS

- ☐ Participants highlighted the need to distinguish between the Do No Significant Harm principle and climate proofing. The discussion emphasised the importance of understanding and documenting both when preparing projects for financing, rather than treating them as interchangeable requirements.
- ☐ Climate resilience was considered necessary from the conceptual stage of project planning. Participants discussed the importance of addressing long-term risks, including heatwaves, floods and storms, before the main project documentation is completed.
- ☐ The transition towards Zero Emission Building standards was discussed alongside a broader assessment of carbon emissions and environmental impacts over the building life cycle. The session linked additional upfront planning requirements with opportunities to access more favourable green financing.
- ☐ Digital technologies and smart building systems were presented as tools for enabling buildings to play a more active role in the energy system. Participants highlighted the associated need for technical training and the integration of these technologies into renovation planning.
- ☐ The session conclusions called for stronger local capacity, technical assistance and interdisciplinary project preparation. Better documentation and support for applicants were identified as necessary to meet complex financing conditions and use available funding opportunities.

